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## A Letter To Wives

*By Pamela Johnson*

*This article is reprinted from the September 1955 edition of American Sunbather & American Nudist Leader magazine. Except for a few dated references that reflect the prevailing culture of that era, the article could have been written yesterday. The observations and advice it contains are just as accurate now as when they were originally penned.*

Although I have never met you I am taking the liberty of writing to you because I understand that you and your husband have become interested in nudism, and you are probably wondering whether or not to take the step and visit camp this summer. My husband and I are nudists and just like you we found our way in by ourselves. However, remembering all the vague fears and worries I fretted about which later proved groundless, I would like to help you. Will you let me try?

There are so many fine books and magazines about nudists and nudism to advise you on the really big problems\* that I shall not attempt to discuss them. You are probably pretty well satisfied in your mind about them at this stage anyway. It is those little worries, that buzz around like gnats that can really be disturbing—I know they were to me.

I must admit that one of my first reactions was the thought that I was considering doing something that was contrary to everything I had ever been taught about modesty and “common decency.” I read all the literature my husband brought home, and intellectually convinced myself that it was a good thing—but there the feeling was, and it rankled. Everyone assured me that once I had my first visit that feeling would be dispelled, but how was I ever going to get around it even enough to let me make that first visit?

Then I began to reason this way. Don and I have a very happy marriage. We’d shared good and bad, and called the big decisions together, and he had never asked me to do anything that was wrong or really unpleasant. True, I hadn’t wanted to do some things at first—I remember my first airplane ride at his insistence—but it usually turned out that I liked it in the end. Then, too, this thing meant a great deal to him, I could see that, and I have always maintained it’s a poor wife who won’t give her husband’s requests and desires at least one try.

Although I didn’t discuss it with him I was secretly worried that I wouldn’t be as attractive to him as I had been, compared with all the beautiful figures I was sure must be there. I later found the answer to that one in the normal mixture of anatomy that was represented—the great Average like myself, with a sprinkling of both better-than and worse-than in the bargain. But the temporary solution I found was the security I felt that our marriage was based on more than physical attractiveness and that if I did fall a little short on that, our mutual love and understanding would even the score. However, being a woman, I began to watch the extra potatoes and ice cream, and found those impossible ten minutes for a little exercise.

I must admit I wondered a bit about the sort of people I was going to meet, half expecting some “peculiar” Bohemians out of the pages of a Greenwich Village novel. I eyed the Marys, and the Hanks, and the Joes we met with the gravest suspicion which is rather funny to me now that I have come to know them better—Mary, the kindergarten teacher; Hank, the local optometrist; and Joe, the patent-attorney.

I was much relieved to find I didn't have to put my clothes in limbo, so to speak, until we were ready to leave, and was mighty glad to put some of them on again when my shoulders began to burn. I had one rather silly notion which I acquired from looking over some pictures of the early camps and parks. Almost every second picture showed a shivering nudist being doused with cold water from a bucket by helpful friends, or a few industrious souls exercising madly under a broiling sun. I made up my mind that if such was the case, there I would draw the line. Neither Don or I liked the idea of being herded into any sort of planned recreation, and it was a pleasant surprise to find no one expected you to do anything except just what you wanted to do. If we seemed inclined to talk there was usually someone to talk to, and we didn't once feel left out, for there were plenty of invitations to join the volleyball game or badminton or whatever was going. I permanently resigned from volleyball after several unsuccessful attempts to get the darn thing over the net, but Don loves it. It was a wonderful feeling to meet entirely new people, and enjoy new interests and activities.

By the time we were enjoying "seconds" in coffee at dinner that first evening, we no longer felt like newcomers. There were no cliques to crash, and with everyone on a first name basis there was no ice to be broken. That is a peculiar thing you have to experience to believe, but there is a friendliness about nudists that you find in no other group. As for Don and I, we have come to count our nudist friends among our closest. They wear very well.

But so much for me and my experiences. I hope they helped. Now, if I may make a suggestion—why don't you try your hand at being a nudist in the privacy of your own home. After all, charity isn't the only thing that begins there. Try sleeping nude, if you don't already—once you get used to it you won't want to sleep any other way. That's the first easy step. Then, when you have your shower or bath, don't grab for a robe except for comfort, of course—do your nails or set your hair or whatever. I think you'll enjoy it. If you've been egged on to some slimming exercises by the fashion columns or helpful friends, try them without clothes, it feels wonderful. You can really get a swing into them. Of course if all this is "old hat" to you, you are half nudist already. That's all it really is, you know. Since it's convenient and healthful at times to dispense with clothes—nudists do. We're not different from other people, just more comfortable.

Well, I have to stop and get supper now. I hope I've been able to help a little. Try it out at home, if you haven't, and then tell your husband you'll give it a try at camp this summer. I know it will bring you closer together than you have ever been, just as it did for Don and me, and you will both be happy. See you at the park this summer.

—Sincerely, Pam

\*The "really big problems" referenced earlier in this article no doubt refer to police raids and other forms of legal harassment that plagued many nudist clubs during the era in which this article was written—especially in the United States. Thankfully, society has matured a great deal since then and such incidents no longer take place. (NLI editor)